

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5565

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MARR, PLO, US, XF
SUBJ: PLAESTINIAN CENTRAL COUNCIL REJECTION OF 242

SUMMARY: TWO CONVERSATIONS AUSTRALIAN CHARGE HELD WITH PCC MEMBERS AUGUST 29 AND 30 REFLECTED DEEP PLO MISTRUST OF EGYPT AND LAMOST NAIVE CONFIDENCE THAT USG WILL FIND A WAY TO TALK TO PLO REGARDLESS OF ITS POSITION ON RES. 242 ONE PCC MEMBER HINTED THAT NEXT PCC MEETING MIGHT BE MORE HELPFUL IN US VIEW WHILE OTHER WAS UNCERTAIN PCC WOULD EVEN MEET AGAIN BEFORE UNGA. EXPECTATION WAS THAT NEW RESOLUTION WOULD BE INTRODUCED IN UNSC TO SUPPLEMENT 242 ON QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. END SUMMARY

1. AUSTRALIAN GCARGE PROVIDED POLOFF COPIES OF MEMCONS (BEING POUCHED) OF HIS MEETINGS AUGUST 29 WITH MOHAMMED AL NASHASIBI, MEMBER PLO CENTRAL COUNCIL AND SECRETARY PLO CENTRAL EXECUTIVE AND AUGUST 30 WITH KHALID FAHUM, CHAIRMAN MNC AND MEMBER OF CENTRAL COUNCIL. CHARGE SAID HE BELIEVED FAHUM AND NASHASHIBI EXPECTED THEIR REMARKS TO BE PASSED
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TO USG. NASHASHIBI SAID OPTIMISM RE POSSIBLE PLO ACCEPTANCE FO RESOLUTION 242 BEFORE PCC MEETING HAD BEEN GENERATED BY EGYPT TO BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON PLO. HE CLAIMED HE HAD HAD VERY BAD EXPERIENCES WITH EGYPT AND EXPECTED LITTLE FROM IT IN FUTURE. IN FACT, HE THOUGHT IF GENEVA CONFERENCE IS NOT CONVENED IN SIX MONTHS EGYPT WILL BE WILLING TO SIGN A SEPARATE PEACE WITH ISRAEL. SADAT HAS COMPLETELY LOST TOUCH

WITH PALESTINIAN SITUATION. FAHUM AGREED THAT EGYPT WAS INTERESTED IN SEPARATE PEACE WITH ISRAEL BUT SAID US IS HOLDING SADAT BACK SINCE IT DOES NOT WANT EGYPT ISOLATED. SECRETARY, ACCORDING TO FAHUM, DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TRIED TO ENGOURAGE HUSSEIN AND PALESTINIANS TO FORM FEDERATION AND JOIN SADAT IN REACHING SEPARATE SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL. HUSSEIN, HOWEVER, REJECTED IDEA. NASHASHIBI CLAIMED HUSSEIN WOULD FOLLOW SYRIAN LEAD BECAUSE OF HIS CONCERN THE SYRIANS COULD USE THE PALESTINIANS TO OVERTHROW HIM. SAID THAT SYRIA AND PLO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN CLOSE AGREEMENT (EXCEPT DURING 197-76 OVER LEBANON). HE ADDED THAT WHEN INTERESTS CLASHED PLO WOULD TEND TO DEFER TO SYRIANS.

2. FAHUM ASID COUNCIL AHD BEEN UNANIMOUS IN REJECTION OF 242. HE ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT ABOUT SIX MEMBERS, UNDER EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE, INITIALLY SUPPORTED ITS ACCEPTANCE. BOTH FAHUM AND NASHASHIBI WERE PERPLEXED AS TO WHY USG MAKING THIS PRECONDITION TO TALKS. SAID THAT PCC COULD UNDERSTAND WHY PLO MIGHT HAVE TO ACCEPT 242 TO ATTEND GENEVA;, BUT IF USG SERIOUS ABOUT WANTING TO SOLVE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, THEN IT SHOULD BE WILLING TO TALK TO PALESTINIANS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. BOTH NASHASHIBI AND FAHUM INDICATED NEXT MOVE IN THIS REGARD UP TO US. BOTH SAID THEY EXPECTED US WILL EVENTUALLY COME AROUND TO TALK WITH PLO ONE WAY OR ANOTHER ABOUT RESOLUTION 242 AND GENEVA AND THEN WILL PRESS ISRAEL TO GO TO PEACE CONFERENCE WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. CONFIDENTIAL

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3. AS FOR STEPS PLO MIGHT TAKE, FAHUM HINTED THAT SOME-THING MORE SATISFACTORY TO US MIGHT COME OUT OF NEXT PCC MEETING IN THREE WEEKS, BUT NASHASHIBI HAD DOUBTS THAT PCC WOULD EVEN MEET AGAIN BEFORE THE UNGA. HE ASID THAT IT IS LOKELY THAT A NEW SECRUITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION WOLL BE PROPOSED DESIGNED TO SUPPLEMENT RES. 242. IT WOULD HAVE TO BE CARE-FULLY WORDED TO AVOID US VETO AND THUS MIGHT NOT GO AS FAR AS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RES. 3236, BUT IT WOULD CONTAIN CLEAR COMMITMENT TO PALESTINIAN POLITICAL RIGHTS. MURPHY

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